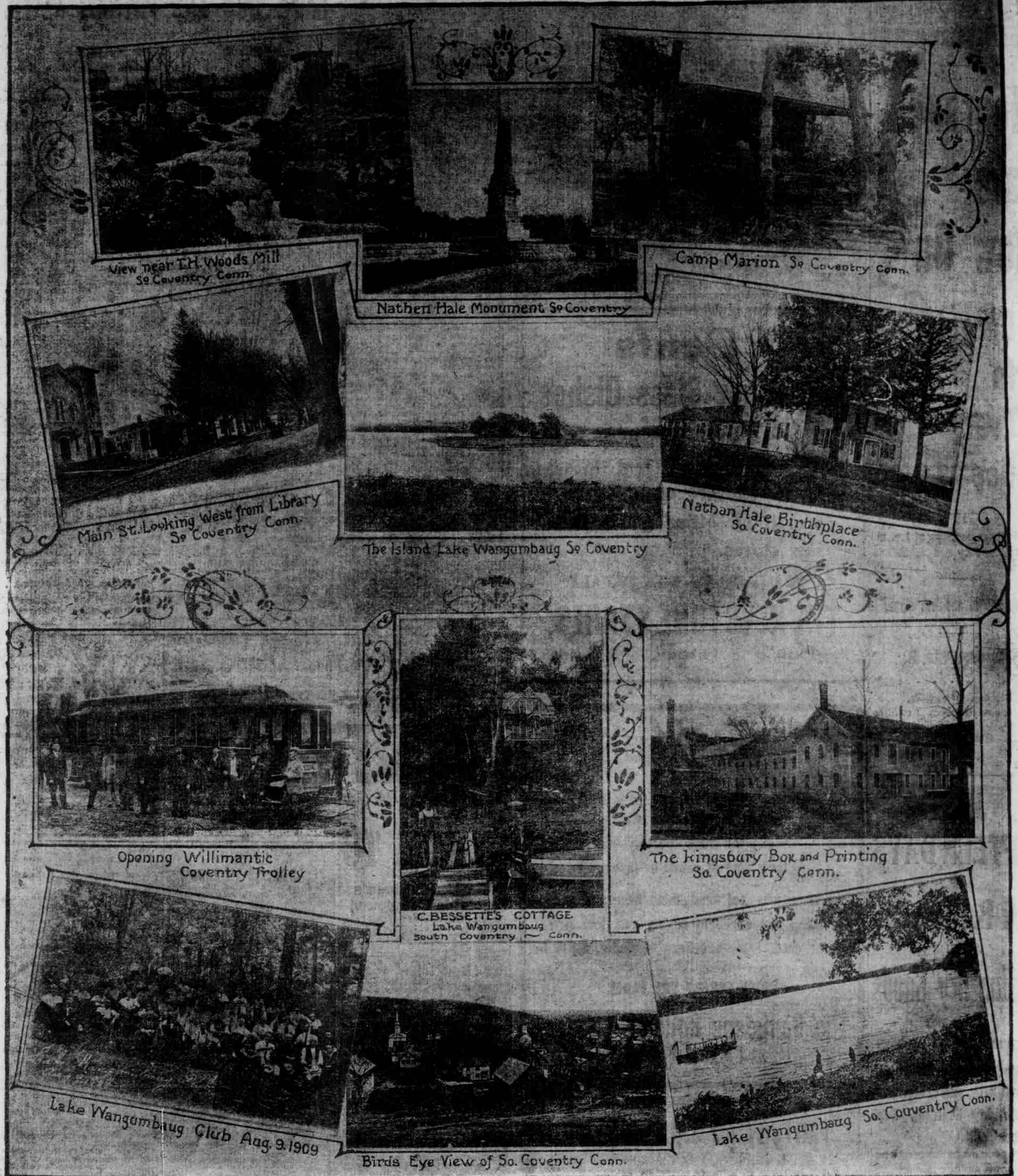


SOUTH COVENTRY IN THE TROLLEY ZONE



THE OPENING OF THE NEW TROLLEY LINE

Significantly Celebrated by the People—A Bird's Eye View of the Place and Other Illustrations of Public Interest.

South Coventry had, without doubt, the biggest day in its history Thursday, when practically the whole population turned out and, united with the citizens of Willimantic and countless other visitors to the trolley celebration by the committee from the Willimantic Board of Trade and Business Men's association, of which George E. Stiles was chairman. Everything was successfully carried out with all the attendant festivities and wholesome enjoyment.

In Holiday Garb.

Coventry did herself proud. Most of the public buildings, business places and nearly all of the residences along the main street of the village were gaily attired in holiday garb of flags, bunting and Japanese lanterns that had been artistically arranged by decorators from Providence and Willimantic. The town presented a lively spectacle of color and animation all day and the lights at night only served to enhance the beauty of the pleasing aspect. In the city the Murray building was decorated with flags, as were a number of the other business blocks along the street, for Coventry was by no means alone in the joy of celebrating an event that means so much to her and to the city of Willimantic.

Trolleys Taxed to Capacity.

During the forenoon hours the cars were filled and after the stores in the city were closed at noon it was almost

impossible to get a seat on any of the cars that piled to and from the beautiful suburb near historic Wangumbaug lake, upon whose shores the big celebration was held. It is impossible to accurately estimate the hundreds upon hundreds of people who were at the lake and in South Coventry Thursday, but some idea may be gained when the returns have been made to the Connecticut company and checked up today. Cars were run as often as they could make the trip, without any particular adherence to schedule.

At Lakeside Park.

Lakeside park was where the most of the pleasures of the day and evening were enjoyed. A bandstand had been erected and here Wheeler's American band of this city, Charles N. C. Wheeler director, rendered three fine concerts during the afternoon and evening. From the stand the singing and speechmaking was also given. The adjoining grove afforded a natural amphitheater and was liberally supplied with seats for pleasure seekers. Amusements at the park comprise a merry-go-round, shooting gallery, picture galleries, dance pavilion, power boats and many other devices that go with the ideal pleasure resort.

A Grand Success.

Everything was very successfully carried out. The speechmaking and singing was particularly good, the concerts were excellent, the fireworks that were arranged for by Fred D. Jordan,

furnished by C. D. Holt of New Haven and set off in charge of one of his competent experts on the land of the Wangumbaug Lake Land association, were also in keeping with the high quality of the entire day's proceedings. Best of all, everybody enjoyed themselves in the extreme and report one grand big time.

The Programme.

The programme as rendered follows: 2 to 3 p. m. band concert; 3 to 5 p. m. literary exercises. Senator W. L. Higgins of South Coventry presided and delivered a most cordial address of welcome. He then introduced the other speakers and numbers on the programme in this order: Response to welcome, Mayor Daniel P. Dugan of Willimantic; tenor solo, E. J. Downey, accompanied by L. H. Josselyn, rendering "If I Had a Thousand Lives;" address, C. Rufus Harte, in behalf of the Connecticut company; brief remarks, Governor-elect Walter E. Clark of the territory of Alaska; song, "Under the Star Spangled Banner," Mr. Downey, accompanied by Mr. Josselyn, written by the latter especially for the occasion; address of the day by Hon. George B. Chandler of Rocky Hill. He outlined the history of the agitation which resulted in the construction of the lines between Hartford and Middletown, Hartford and Bloomfield and Willimantic and Coventry by the Connecticut company and complimented the railroad on its enterprise in undertaking the construction of these

lines in the midst of the panic. A crowd of his listeners was devoted to the discussion of the recent session of the general assembly.

From 5 to 6 p. m. there was another band concert. Various amusements and refreshments were then sought. From 6 to 7 p. m. dancing; from 7 to 8 p. m. band concert; from 8 to 9 p. m. display of fireworks; and from 9 p. m. on dancing again completed the day.

Best of Order Preserved.

Excellent order was preserved throughout the day and evening by this detail of police: Officers McArthur, Grady, Paulhus and Weeks, who were especially assigned to duty at the scene of the festivities by Capt. E. H. Richmond of the Willimantic police force.

HISTORIC TOWN OF

SOUTH COVENTRY.

Known Chiefly as Birthplace of Nathan Hale—Yet Has Splendid Natural Advantages Which Will Be Enhanced by New Trolley Line—Brief Sketch of Its Growth from Time of Indians to the Present.

While not as old as some towns in the thirteen original colonies from which these glorious United States had their origin, South Coventry is one of the three oldest towns in what is now Tolland county and has contributed her quota toward the present renown of this incomparable nation and numbers among her honored dead some of the most illustrious names in the nation's history, and now that she has been more firmly placed upon the map by the advent of the trolley she is destined to a still more thrifty growth and will forge to the front rank of the thriving towns of the state with remarkable strides.

The picturesque little town, hereto-

fore known chiefly as the birthplace of that martyred son—Nathan Hale, nestling on the hills and in the pretty vales easterly from Wangumbaug lake, is particularly well endowed with almost unlimited natural advantages that when more fully developed must surely rival many of our famed cities throughout the length and breadth of the land. Timbered highlands and fertile valleys are in abundance and Mill brook, that is fed from the unfailing waters of Wangumbaug lake, so winds around in its course as to permit many varied industries ample power, because of its wonderful fall, varying from 14 to 40 feet.

Prior to 1675 the Indians used the land of what is now the town of Coventry as a hunting ground. It was annually burned over to give fresh feeding places for wild animals, thus providing food for the Mohegans. The land was in this way denuded of timber so that it is said when the town was first settled an ox cart could be driven over the young timber lands which had sprung up since the yearly fires of the Indians had ceased. In the early part of the year 1676 Joshua, third son of Uncas, chief of the Mohegans, made a will in which he bequeathed to Capt. Joseph Pitch of Windsor and to fifteen others all the tract of land which includes the present towns of South Windsor, Bolton, Vernon, Andover, Hebron, Coventry, Mansfield, Hampton and Chaplin. This donation was approved by the general assembly.

The legatees conveyed their rights, so far as the town of Coventry was concerned, to William Pitkin, Joseph Talcott, William Whiting and Richard Lord, to be a committee to lay out the township and settle on the lands. This committee was appointed by the general assembly on May 9, 1704. On Oct. 11, 1711, this committee was reappointed, and Nathaniel Rust, who had already settled on the lands, was added to the committee, to carry into execution the primary designs of the original appointment. At the same session of

the general assembly the township was named Coventry.

Nathaniel Rust and some others settled in the town about the year 1709. In the spring of 1799 there came a number of 2000 householders from Northampton, Essex county, Mass., Hartford, Conn., Reading and Lancaster, Alaska, Stonington, Killingworth, Windham, Conn., and some other towns. The region was then a pasture ground for the horses of Hartford. These horses were branded and turned loose into the wilderness to the east. The town was laid off six miles square Oct. 11, 1797. The first survey of land was made April 8, 1798, by Mr. Caleb Stanley, colony surveyor. The town was laid off into 98 allotments by the committee above mentioned.

The first proprietors fifteen in number, each received five allotments and three allotments were reserved for the support of religion and schools. The town was incorporated at the session of the general assembly in May, 1712. The settlement of the town is usually dated from 1709, when, as before stated, there arrived quite a number of families from the towns mentioned heretofore.

At the time there were but two towns in what is now Tolland county, namely, Mansfield, settled in 1703, and Hebron, settled in 1704.

The first house in the town seems to have been built by one Samuel Birchard, on the southerly side of Wangumbaug lake, which means dew water, according to the history of Tolland county, near the house now owned by Henry F. Dimock, which was at one time occupied by his father, the late Dr. Timothy Dimock, who was a well known practicing physician up to the early '70's.

In the valley of the Hop river, near the house known as the Cyril Parker place, there was a regular village of savages.

For approximately thirty years the religious community was embraced in what is known as "the First church (Continued on Page Eleven.)"